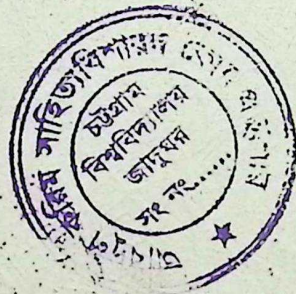


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RECOGNITION OF BANGLADESH

A QUESTION
TO THE CONSCIENCE OF THE WORLD



By

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RECOGNITION OF B A N G L A D E S H AS AN INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC

Birth is always a painful process. The 75 million people, occupying 55 thousand square miles of the globe, have emerged on the map of the world through pain of death and destruction—as an independent Nation. No nation has possibly passed through so much of fire, against so heavy an odd. If sufferings and sacrifices are prerequisites of a birth of a Nation, Bangladesh has indeed created a new history stained with the blood of martyrs and innocents.

This struggle of the Bengalis is not an isolated incident—it is spread over a period of 23 years. Unfortunately, these ill-fated millions have always stood up for freedom and justice irrespective of caste, creed and religion—and that has brought on them the wrath of a people, who were yoked together in 1947 through a political arrangement of Lord Mountbatten—the last Governor General of undivided India, who presided over the game of partition. The intolerance of a section of people and intransigence of politicians coupled with hatred and exploitation swept the people to accept a political arrangement, which may be called a “rape on Geography”.

True this was accepted with reluctance with an expectation of a new opportunity, to give for the Indian Muslims ideals of freedom and justice a “local habitation and a name”. But in between ideals and reality, there is always an yearning gap. A quick look at history will reveal the age of the conflict. Its roots lie deep in the basic cultural, geographical and traditional differences of the two wings of Pakistan. The difference was thought to be bridged with religion—rather in the name of religion. This experiment was an expensive one in terms of human lives. It became a tale of misery—too deep for tears. At the people of Bangladesh bent all their energy, made all accommodations for their uncongenial partners, both political and economic, but they would not see reason. They would not care for the ennobling tenets of Islam, which to my

ducts were then sold to the protected market of East Pakistan. Only Textile goods, worth about 50 crores is sold to East-Pak every year. A colonial pattern of economy was the reward that East Pakistan received in the hand of West Pakistan. Upto the third plan period (1965-68), only 37 per cent of the development expenditure fell to the share of East Pakistan. Only 20 per cent of the foreign aid was spent in East Pakistan, and 80 per cent in West.

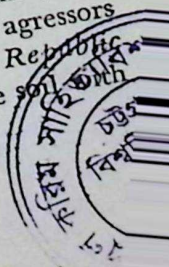
East Pakistanis constituted no more than 5 per cent of the officers of the Pak army,—in Navy officers level is 19 per cent and technical cadre 9 per cent and in the Naval rank only 28.5 per cent. In Airforce 11 per cent Pilots are Bengalis. From 1947 to 1960, out of 50 senior army officers who attained the rank of Major General only one was Bengali.

According to the official Economist of Pakistan 20 families of West Pakistan, control 66 per cent of Industrial assets, 70 per cent Insurance funds and 80 per cent of the Bank-assets.

This is the backdrop of the present conflict. Turning to political aspect from 1948 to 68,—the western rulers persistently devised mischievous methods to squeeze out the Bengalis from participation in the administration of the country. Upto 1968, the East Pakistani representation in the Civil Service was only 36 per cent. The western rulers from the very day of inception of Pakistan, began to indulge in conspiracies to retain the bastion of power in their wing—and a handful of millionaires, made a common cause with the ruling clique. The poor became poorer and the rich multiplied their millions. Whoever raised a protest, came to be looked down after as a branded traitor. Even laws were framed for the benefit of the few. The History of Pakistan in short, is the history of deception under the guise of religion, and integrity. To the western rulers these two weapons were ideally suited to befool the vast majority of people of Pakistan—who in the name of religion would readily accept even an irrational proposition. The difficulty that the rulers faced, was the growing consciousness of the educated middle class and the student community.

As early as 1952, the rulers of West Pakistan struck the first blow on the Bengali language, and systematically attempt to trample under foot the cultural heritage of the Bengalis. Martyrs' blood was spilt, and then only Bengali was grudge

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rule was imposed in Bengal to smother the
of the majority people of Pakistan. A Constitu-
tion was framed in 1956, but before it could unburthen its contents
and of a dictator robbed the nation of its democratic
constitution. It was not merely a coup by Gen. Ayub to snatch
power but to perpetuate the colonial supremacy of the west,
to complete the process of subjection of the east. From
1958 to 1969 Ayub, the ring leader of the western ruling coterie,
tore to the wind all semblance of democracy and introduced
a chosen band of quislings, with a sham pretext of a 'democracy'.
The continuation of the system for ten years is due to the
efficacy of corruption, bribery, nepotism in human life. The
entire nation was smarting and reeling under the feet of a
dictator,—and it burst into action when their leader Shaik
Mujibur Rahuman was being tried for treason (Sk Mujib's trial
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stage, leaving the state craft in the hand of his able general
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no better than that of his predecessors, but he adopted a new
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dissensions of political parties. But the people of Bengal being
conscious of the sinister motive proved greater than the schemers
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The cat could no longer be concealed. Thus the long looked
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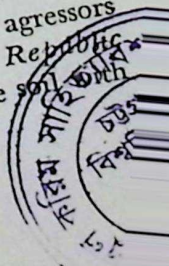
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a spontaneity of a plant that sprouts,—and it is growing from strength to strength. The rulers of the West, pampered by the American rulers, and assured by their Chinese allies, are now making frantic attempts to save their soul, but their doom is near—nearer than their shadows.

The Bengalis as a nation is posing a question now to the conscience of the world.

Do we deserve recognition from you as an independent nation?

The question of Recognition is not a pure question of law—the concept is more political and moral than legal. True there are certain established and accepted criteria, in determining the question, but all such considerations are subject to the enlightened national interest of the State granting recognition. The golden rule for granting recognition is that the government of the emerging state should enjoy habitual obedience of the majority of the people living within well defined territory with a reasonable expectancy of permanence. Secondly, the claim to recognition is not devoid of legitimacy and lastly the proclaimed policy and ideals of the State are in conformity with the natural law embodying the principles of justice and freedom.

Judging the case of Bangladesh in the light of the aforesaid rationale of recognition, it is by now as clear as day light that the Government of Bangladesh is not a myth but a reality backed by the entire population of 75 millions, except the few quislings, who can be counted on fingers. The people have not only habitually given allegiance to the government formed by their elected representatives, but they have been waging a righteous struggle in defence of their government. They are laying down their lives for the cause of independence against a brute force of imperialism and colonialism. Imposition of rule over the weaker people by means of force with political, economic, social and cultural implication, is the accepted definition of imperialism and the people of Bangladesh is now engaged in one of the bitterest struggle against these colonial and imperialistic activities of the western rulers of the minority province of West Punjab.

If any particular government ignores the mandate of the people obtained through a fair election,—and instead unleash

the engine of torture, death and destruction only because the mandate favours a greater autonomy to the provinces—what the unarmed people can do? Should they surrender abjectly to the forces of evil which seek to crush the human values, the civilised norm of life and annihilate a particular section of people who call themselves Bengalis?

Will the signatories of the charter of United Nations tell us,—What the Bengalis could do ?

I am proud to say that the Bengalis, have only reaffirmed their faith in the fundamental human rights and are defending the dignity and worth of human being—on behalf of themselves as well as the humanity as a whole. If U.N.O. chooses to become the hand-maid of a powerful state, and remains blind to the naked aggression upon an unarmed people—the signatories of the Charter will have to declare someday that U.N.O. is nothing but an UNNECESSARY Organisation manufacturing tall talks signifying nothing.

How long can the U.N.O. hide its face comfortably under the cover of "domestic jurisdiction"? It is not a case of mutiny or rebellion. It is a case of a legally constituted party, democratically elected by the people—who has democratically decided to part with the forces of evil, to save the people from economic exploitation and political subjugation after exhausting all possible means to arrive at a peaceful solution. In this respect let me quote the opinion of "The News Week"—dated 12th April, 1971, a respectable organ of public opinion.

"Ironically as independence-fever mounted throughout Bangladesh, it was Mujib who sought to moderate the passion. Aware that any unilateral declaration of independence would bring down the wrath of the army, Mujib desperately sought to compromise that would give Bengal the autonomy his people demanded while preserving at least a semblance of Pakistani National Unity as the army demanded. Mujib was the last hope that Pakistan's two distant and disparate wings might achieve some kind of accommodation. What finally undid Mujib's efforts was the supercilious attitude of the West Pakistanis especially the Punjabi who dominate the army and who have been nurtured on impassioned patriotism and cliches about the inferiority of the Bengalis".

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The die is cast now. The notions of Unity is reduced to a mere fiction. Yahia has successfully killed Pakistan. The Bengalis are merely carrying the costly coffin to its infamous grave. Bangladesh has come to *stay—with all the moral and legal right* to be heard, appreciated and recognised by the world. The expectancy of Permanance of the new *Government of Bangladesh is guaranteed by the will of its people* and good will of the free world.

If the conscience of the world is not dead, Bangladesh will lean heavily upon it, and demand of it to reassert its will.

If News medias are any index of the public opinion of the world let me quote the observation by a renowned Editor.

The Sunday Telegraph (March 28, 1971) writes in its editorial "The Victims":

"It is hard for the Western mind to absorb the full dreadfulfulness of the Civil War in East Pakistan—once again it seems that the full fury of the latter part of the 20th Century has fallen upon one of the poorest and vulnerable of peoples—the country which was conjured into being by an exercise in political adroitness in 1947 is falling apart amid carnage. Whatever happens the old Pakistan is dead.

The rulers are trying to deny the fact by arms but the attempt cannot be other than tragic folly".

The Daily Telegraph said on March 29, '71 that all the bayonets from Punjab cannot shove back into the bottle the Genie of Bengali Nationalism.

The New York times recorded its reaction on March 28th, 1971 saying "Even if West Pakistan troops succeeded in imposing a semblance of Central rule over the nation, the violence that is now sweeping the East Pakistan and the sustained repression that would be required to bend the Bengalis to the Islamabad will would add a barrier of hate to the differences of race, language, customs and Geography."

Some International Jurists, may attempt to argue that Recognition to Bangladesh will be a 'precipitate recognition' under the International law. But I would like to repel such arguments by pointing out, that the recognition of the United States itself by France in 1778 was precipitate.

The United States accorded premature recognition in 1903 to Panama when it seceded from Columbia. America not only

recognised but fought in aid of Panama so as to liberate it from Columbia.

The U.S.A. had recognised Texas in 1837 in spite of the resentment of the mother country Mexico.

U.S.S.R. and China recognised the Government of Sihanouk even though he was not in effective control of Cambodia.

To bring a finality to question of legitimacy, I can profitably quote, what Mr. Justice M. C. Chagla of India has observed—which I believe cannot be improved upon:

“To my mind it is the legally and validly constituted Government of Bangladesh that has a much better title to legitimacy than Yahia Khan whereas the Shaik claims the right through democratic forces, through the wishes of the people, Yahia Khan's claim depends solely on brute force and the strength of the military machine. Our Government (India) should not hesitate in coming to an early decision on the issue of recognising the Government of Bangladesh. Let us take a bold and courageous decision now ; otherwise History will not forgive us”.

I can only reiterate the words of Mr. Justice Chagla to the nations of the world and add that if you allow your conscience to sleep now,—in no time you will cover yourself with the ignominy of surrendering to a brute force, the spectre of which may rise any time any where in the world. I invite the attention of the great people of America to seek peace in their own souls first and then in the distant shores of China. Peace will remain as illusive as the mirage, if you lend your guns to shed more blood to buy peace in China. If your great might becomes the scourge of humanity, History will not forgive you. If you allow your great nation to be bogged into petty consideration of diplomatic gains your image as a Champion of the free world will be shattered beyond recognition. Your allies will run away from you as a child does from the ghost. If you still choose to hide yourself under cloak of “Internal affairs”—you will not clothe yourself in eternal glory, but you will deface your own glorious struggle against the colonial rule.

To-day the people of India stands alone in recognising the justness of our cause, we are overwhelmed with the warmth of their sympathy, the noble blood of the Prime Minister has apparently flowed a little quicker with the tidings from the

East, but coming to question of de-jure recognition, India is limping with the weight of her conscience. So she too is, timorous to take the initiative. She is still groping in darkness and hesitating to leap forward into the heaven of light—truth and justice. I am sure they cannot long endure the conflict and she will accord recognition to us in no time.

In recognising Bangladesh, the nations of the world will only register their sympathy for a cause—which they profess to believe. If they really believe in Democracy,—they are required to protect it without merely preaching the gospel. The league of nations, founded on the rock of narrow self-interest of the nations who founded it. The U.N.O. will have no better fate if the great powers of the world do not strive to safeguard its ideals.

Is not America aware that when an embittered nation rises to a man to tear itself free from its own mother-country, no other nation can force them into that unholy alliance again. Political adroitness can make temporary arrangement but the unity cannot be achieved. It is the mind of a nation that matters. Indulgence in soulless politiking will not bring peace, nor further the cause of freedom. A nation becomes a nation when it feels that it is so—all other qualifications are acquired in due course of time. Recognition need not depend upon other those minor considerations.

What harm will this new state cause to them? We are not against any particular state—we have a fund of friendly feelings to all, if they only allow us to live, and live with honour.

The question of recognition has a deeper implication of right and wrong. If any nation of the world believes that Yahia and his military govt. is on the right, we can hardly persuade them to recognise us, but it will be a great pity, if they yet send ship-load of arms to crush a people's war against tyranny and injustice. If Pakistan is falling brick by brick under the weight of injustice of its rulers,—can America build it again? If partners fall apart,—what the neighbours can do? Separation delayed is separation confirmed. The misery of the people can still be avoided if the great powers show signs of maturity in their assessment of facts. They should grow to appreciate that unity of the two wings of Pakistan cannot be

achieved again. There is a rift in the lute. Nothing can bring back the symphony of unity—there is a revolt of the soul. The thin bond that linked the distant parts of the physical world—was not power but a will to live together,—a sense of common danger from outside—but if danger emanates from within, the will is snapped. Such is the case in Pakistan. All the arms of the world will not restore the inner urge to unite—because all the water of the Pacific will not wash the blood—that stains the hand of Pakistani rulers. The concept of Pakistan has vanished into thin air.

The people of Bangladesh believe that their cause has already transcended the limits of International law—it has seized and touched the fringe of International conscience. Our cause has taken the flight into the realm of thought, and it will in no time conquer the soul of humanity as our strength lies in our faith in truth, justice and democracy.

There is no death for the faithfuls. If no one responds to our call, we will march alone till the goal is reached.

JOY BANGLA

